



# 2002

ANTARCTIC  
PHOTO,  
POETRY  
& PROSE  
CALENDAR



Guess who's coming to dinner?

Photo by Jeff Gustofson, Palmer

This calendar displays the creativity of some of the people working and researching at the three U.S. Antarctic Programs during the 2001-2002 season. The photos and writing were selected by panels of judges in a competition run by *The Antarctic Sun*, a National Science Foundation sponsored publication covering life and research in the Antarctic. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the NSF. Read current and past issues of the *Sun* at: [www.polar.org/antsun](http://www.polar.org/antsun). Contact the *Sun* at [AntSun@polar.org](mailto:AntSun@polar.org) or in McMurdo, visit the office in Building 155 or call 2407.

It is January on the Coast of Maine

By Sue Vittner, McMurdo Station

The sun tries again to melt the snow that clings  
to the rocks. The sand imprinted with the same shapes  
of summer is strong.

I sit and watch lovers' arms lock in place. Secured  
to not walk the long beach alone, the huddle against the chill  
that tells them love can be either a noun or a verb.

Dogs run and drool in excitement. They sniff to meet each other.  
Their owners only smile, but I think they each wish this stranger  
would become their next lover.

Surfers dressed like seals sit on their boards waiting for the next wave.  
They dream of being in Hawaii and Puerto Escondido and wonder  
why they did not go back this winter.

I smile and press my mittens into the solid earth. Glad to be here. Glad  
to be alone. But I can't help thinking of you lying somewhere in Antarctica,  
a place I only know as a long blotch of white that aligns the bottom of my map  
hanging over our bed.



Weddell

Photo by Galen Schlich, carpenter, McMurdo

One year has now gone by. I realize I am still alone on a coast. This time I am  
rediscovering that white on the bottom of the map that your pictures brought  
to life. But you are in Maine sitting on my imprints from last summer.

Irony and Providence have weaved their magic, and switched our homes.  
They teach us that plans are as impermanent as this sea ice I have grown  
to love, as in flux as my poem.

Here, I watch seals lie on a wave frozen some time ago, maybe while you  
were here last year. You taught me to learn from these seals,  
reflect on how content they look.

I meditate and try to read the message from the winds here. Decipher the patterns  
in the snow, the shadows. They seem more simple than those I heard in the sand  
last winter. Quieter, calmer. I smile and press my gloves onto the packed snow,  
and know I am glad to be here, alone.

January 2003

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
			New Year's Day			
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
					1912 - Robert Scott reaches the South Pole	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	1957- Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station officially opened					
26	27	28	29	30	31	
	1820-Thaddeus von Bellingshausen becomes the first person to see Antarctica					



All tied up in Palmer

Photo by Dan Naber, Palmer

Condition One

By Karen Joyce, McMurdo

The storm had been hitting us hard for a week before the Power Plant caught on fire and the electricity around town shuddered and died. That was about the same time the windows on the dorm lounges shattered. Winds like a depressurizing jetliner swept along the hallways and sucked violently under doors, filling rooms with snow as fine as dust. Those of us who were left huddled together in a tight pack in the darkened stairwell, trying to agree on what to do next. Quinn said we should try to make it to Building 155, where the emergency generator might have kicked on; Rocket wanted to stay put, even though the last shred of warmth had fled and there was nothing left to eat.

Most of us sided with Quinn and suited up to make a run for 155, for what we thought was our last scrap of hope. Roped together, the hurricane winds yanked us outside into the blank whiteness of the winter storm and knocked us off our feet into soft blankets of snow. We held onto each other's pant legs, crawling blind against the gale till we hit a wall - or was it a roof? Quinn dug down till he found a jagged hole we could climb through, into a snow-packed room.

But 155 was a windswept ghost town, like the dorms. Under the coat racks, Jen tripped over a pile of stiff bodies, their red parkas drawn up over their heads. We tunnelled through the snow drifts in the Galley searching for food but found only a hundred-pound bag of frozen steaks. Exhausted, we pulled our hoods tight and laid down together in the freezer unit. Delicate hoarfrost shapes glistened in the beams of our flashlights. We became increasingly warm as we slept.

January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
Icestock and Chili Cook-off		New Year's Day				MAAG Art Show
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Scott's Hut Race				1912 - Robert Scott reaches the South Pole		
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
1957- Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station officially opened Golf tournament	Martin Luther King Day					
27	28	29	30	31		
1820-Thaddeus von Bellingshausen becomes the first person to see Antarctica Marathon						



King of the Hill

Photo by Geoffrey Gilbert

Flight

By Andrew McCarter, McMurdo Station.

He watches the worry lines of his pale, middle-aged face blur in the vibrating rear-view mirror of a Greyhound bound to forget everyone. He's been on this bus, this road before, but then only during daylight, and only to return home that evening. But tonight he's taken care of everything: necessities in the small suitcase he smuggled to work this morning; telephone call to his wife telling the lie that tonight he'll work late. Now that there's nothing left to arrange, nothing to do but ride, he can recline his seat, close his eyes.

He remembers how soundly he slept last night beside his wife, but how he woke earlier than usual because of a sharp pain behind his left ear, a pain so sharp he had touched it with a fingertip to see no blood was drawn. Something in his pillow, he had thought. Now he dreams it was the quill-tip of a feather long, broad, and rigid enough for flight somehow mixed in with the warm, soft down of his pillow-an image he wakes with upon arriving at the station.

He phones his wife, pretends he's still at work: he won't be home for another hour, two hours; she shouldn't wait up. He asks if the kids are asleep; they are. He buys a ticket for the next bus home.

He sits on the edge of the bed in the dark, gently, so as not to wake his wife. He runs his hand lightly over his pillow, then feels it firmly for the feather he has in mind, the feather meant for flight buried deep within soft down. He doesn't find it. His wife doesn't wake. He flips his pillow over for the night.

December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1  1959- Antarctic Treaty is signed	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14  1911- Roald Amundsen becomes the first person to reach the South Pole
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24  Christmas Eve	25  Christmas	26	27	28
29	30	31			Annual December Events Women's Soiree Helo Party Ross Island Arts and Crafts Show Christmas Eve Party Ob Hill Uphill race Kiwi New Year's Party	



Arthur Sea Ice, Marr Glacier

Photo by Doug Fink, Palmer

### Bonaparte Point

By Janet Huddleston, *McMurdo Station*

The scientist's zodiac weaved its way through the icebergs in Arthur Harbor and dropped us off at Bonaparte Point. It was a Sunday afternoon in January at Palmer Station on the Antarctic Peninsula. Most of the snow had melted and we hopped from one lichen-covered boulder to another. Orca whales spouted in the distance. The odor of elephant seals wallowing in their excrement was strong. Add to that the chattering penguin colony on Torgesen Island and our senses were overwhelmed.

Icebergs littered the bay. Sometimes these bergs would drift in and hang

around for quite some time. We gave them names and took bets on when they would calve and collapse. Two such bergs floated just offshore. One slowly started turning over, exposing its brilliant blue undersides. As it calved, a huge explosion of ice shot out from the side. The resulting wave sent us frantically running towards higher ground.

We had been told to bring walking sticks with us to ward off aggressive fur seals that can move quickly overland when so inclined. These poles proved useful at keeping away the dive-bombing skuas that were protecting their nests. I raised the

sticks high in the air so the scavenger birds would strike those, rather than my head. Scenes from Alfred Hitchcock's "The Birds" flashed through my mind and I was happy that sunglasses covered my eyes. Skuas have been known to peck out the eyes of their disabled victims.

We hauled ourselves back across Hero Inlet on the trolley. Later, we relaxed in the hot tub overlooking the glacier. An incredible sunset illuminated the ocean, creating the illusion that the icebergs were buttes in a desert. The sun quickly disappeared below the horizon, flashing green in a final farewell.

## February

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Annual February events Final issue of Antarctic Sun Greenwave arrives and vessel offload					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 First sunset 12:59 a.m.	13	14 Valentine's Day	15	16 1956- McMurdo Station officially opened
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28		





Lake Hoare

Photo by Galen Schlich, McMurdo

Zen Garden

By Cherie Wilson, McMurdo Station

Give me the simple life  
Where only two species  
Outwit the sun  
Where there is no mercy  
For the kangaroo mouse  
Caught in the night  
And I cannot close my eyes  
To the face of the moon.

I go walking in the night,  
The sand like a starched white napkin  
To be crumpled underfoot,  
Alerting the sidewinder.  
My ears tingle with the strain  
Of listening  
And by degrees  
The numbness of civilized life  
Slips away.

November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Annual November events Thanksgiving Turkey Trot					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11 Veterans Day	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28 1929-Richard Byrd and three others successfully fly over the South Pole Thanksgiving	29	30

A Day Down South

By Trace Wright, South Pole

The Earth spins  
slower at the pole,  
my mind races  
across this frozen frontier  
as I walk to work,  
    where am I  
        why am I  
            whoa

Climbing the yellow  
spiral spine of my job,  
toiling on top of the bottom of the world  
with frozen fingers  
that have ice cream headaches.

Gaining a new perspective on flat, curving  
from this windy height  
struggling with sheet metal  
holding on tight.

Life dissipates as vapor into the sea above,  
yet does not go with out notice  
for most of it is frozen to my face  
as a creamy white frosting.

Looking down upon the shiny silver dome,  
it is there I will be nurtured from this harsh nature  
a singular bosom on a very flat chest  
with an inverted frozen nipple

What relief does come, is in the warmth  
of my co-worker's frost bitten  faces  
the meals we share in a day-glow galley  
while searching for a five letter word for a loop in a lasso.



Sculpture

Photo by Douglas Ruuska, McMurdo

March

Sunday		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Annual March events Final Sunset St. Patty’s Day Party						1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
31 Easter					Good Friday		

Feet of Clay

By Cherie Wilson, McMurdo Station

I could spend my time knee-deep in the wild grass,  
Waves of wind separating the stands of my hair  
Seeds clinging on to me with the hope of life  
Don't you know  
We can walk  
Wherever we like  
To places that give us what we need  
To places where the soul of the earth  
Breathes through our eyes  
We must all go sometime  
To a wild place  
And grow new roots.



Boots in Scott's hut

Photo by Galen Schlich, McMurdo



Hut Point window

Photo by Robert Ricketson, McMurdo

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Annual October Events Mainbody begins First issue of The Antarctic Sun Wine tasting Halloween Party		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14 Columbus Day	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31 Halloween		





MEC Rave Photo by William Sutton, McMurdo

Polie doors

By Timothy Pollard, South Pole

Stuck in a land where all the doors  
Were stolen from innocent freezers

Ancient white enamel freezers with steel handles  
Ordered in the clipped tones of 1950's prosperity  
Swinging easily on over designed hinges  
Cushy bulging edges imitating pleasure

Broad shouldered silver steel freezers  
That speak with meat locker intensity  
Of desperate men hulking sides of beef  
In the accented syllables of foreign hope

Miniature icebox doors wide but short  
Reminiscent of February saws on clear white ponds  
The scent of spruce chips  
And the clamor of delivery horse hooves on cobble-  
stone streets

Blue Jetson post sixties foam doors  
Mounted on pods that jabber electronically  
To themselves  
Unintelligibly

April

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 Tax day	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30		Annual April events Firehouse rodeo Winter beach party Job Fair		



Dragonfish attack

Photo by Henry Kaiser, McMurdo

The Whale

By Janet Huddleston, McMurdo

The whale perched in front of the coffee house for all to see. I have a photo of it from my first season. A winter-over had welded together old chain, pipe and scrap metal to create this work of art. I remember when a janitor walked right into it and split his lip open. He couldn't see it with his parka hood up.

Someone in power decided that he didn't like this whale. He said it represented poor use of company time. How could employees possibly have time to make something like this when they should be working six days a week? There's no

time to be creative. He wanted to get rid of it before some Distinguished Visitors came. He suggested cutting it up for the heavy metal bin.

A small "Save the Whale" petition was circulated at a town meeting, defending our rights to be creative. The whale won.

It now sits in a less prominent position near the gas pumps, slowly rusting away. It has a nice view over Winter Quarter's Bay and the Royal Society Range. If you look closely, you'll see a wistful look in its ball bearing eye, as it wishes for open water and a chance of freedom.

September

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Labor Day					
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30				Annual September Events Flag tying party Welcome Winfly party	



Midnight Sun

Photo by Steve Alexander, McMurdo

Letting Go

By Daren Blythe, South Pole

The wind is blowing hard against my hands and shoulders  
As I cling to you for all I am worth.  
I have held on for so long now as you have climbed higher  
And I can no longer see the ground.

Finally I realize that I must let go  
Or be carried into those rarefied reaches to asphyxiate  
Where the sky is no longer blue  
And the sun no longer warm.

So I give in to the wind  
And I am falling, your wings  
A dwindling white cross  
Against the blue above.

The wind no longer trying to rip me away  
But cradling me as I sink  
While I try to summon the strength  
To pull the cord.

May

Sunday		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Annual May events Bring on the night party				1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
26	27 Memorial Day	28	29	30	31		



Ice Photo by Shad O'Neel, McMurdo

## The Deserter

By Daren Blythe, South Pole.

The deserter stood with the boy while they pondered the skeleton at their feet. Through its ribs a slender oak sapling stretched upward. Smoke rose behind them on the horizon where the ashes of a town lay smoldering in the daybreak.

My Pa died here, the boy said. Two years ago in the first battle. Ma died when they burned the town afterward. I been alone ever since.

The deserter looked down at the bones. He looked at the boy, and looked at the sparrow in the small cage the boy carried in his hands. I was born here, he said.

Bleeding onto the ground as the night froze the life out of the wounded. A figure put forth from the trees rose above him, and he let go his bladder in relief at death finally come. But it turned out to be a woman who lit a fire on the cold ground beside him. She dressed the gurgling hole in his chest and sat with him until dawn, never speaking a word. As day came he realized he had raped her the day before, when the soldiers ransacked the town in a final desperate life-spasm. In later years he would ponder his salvation, this gift she had given him, turning it over and over like a golden meteorite fallen from the infinite blackness of the night sky.

Lying quietly as the day warmed, watching a white-bearded, crazed old man plant acorns under the dead.

He continued up the hillside with the boy, the sparrow cheebing in its cage.

So where you headed, Mister?

I'm going home. I had enough of the war.

The boy said nothing. They crested the hill and stopped, looking down on the fields to the east. The deserter looked at the boy, put his hand gently on the blond head.

Come back with me, he said. My folks'll take care of you. We'll give you a home.

They boy nodded and tears welled up in his eyes. He opened the rusty cage and the sparrow hopped to the threshold, cocking its head from side to side briefly before jumping up into the sky of morning.

## August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Annual August events Here Comes the Sun Party Annual Ross Island (winter) Art Show Ordering complete for vessel Winfly begins				1  1914-Ernest Shackleton began his epic journey aboard the <i>Endurance</i> .	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31



Jeff Scanniello

Photo by John Sale

### Wind

By Anne Dal Vera, McMurdo Station.

Wind is a steady presence, air pressing against my cheek and nose. Some people don't like the feel of wind on their faces. Wind reminds me that I am alive. Green and red flags flap vigorously, outstretched in the wind's grasp. Wind bounces snow grains and sends them flying across the ice. Wind is as big as the globe and as small as a breath. As light as a feather and as heavy as a snowstorm. Wind is transparent as a Fata Morgana and as murky as close fog. It is the shape of a sharp needle and the caress of a lover. Air carries smells: fish frying, sweat, diesel . . . Wind is as rough as a shove and as gentle as a whisper.

This air, here, now, has travelled a great distance, sliding over ice and snow, building up against mountains and funnelling through passes, no barriers to its progress. Yesterday's air was warm and soft. Last

week the warm, wet wind stung my face with snow crystals as I swam through it like a deep sea diver caught in mud at the ocean's bottom. Then it piled snowflakes in drifts taller than a person. The wind wailed through overhead wires and snapped flags. Air condensed out of snow formed hard sastrugi waves with thin translucent crests.

Katabatic winds constantly flow down across Antarctica; pulled by gravity over the polar plateau. Changing always, they seem to be: fickle, responsive, exciting, passionate, calm, eager, inviting, comforting, soothing, nurturing, uproar, wild, potential, adrift, nudging, cooling, freezing.

The purpose of wind: Balance of high and low pressure, the heart, energy and power of life on this continent; in my soul.

## June

Sunday		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Annual June events Gong Show							1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
23 1961- Antarctic Treaty enters into force	24	25	26	27	28	29	
30							





Barne Glacier

Photo by Eric Coplin, McMurdo

**In a Roman amphitheater**

*By Andrew McCarter, McMurdo*

The tragedy performed daily  
between ruins, their shadows,  
and a rising and falling sun.

July

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
				Independence Day		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	21
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	Annual July Events Fourth of July Party Mid-winter sprint to Scott Hut		